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ABSTRACT

On September 9th and 10th, 1999, four leaders of three communitywide educational collaborations met to discuss their experiences in promoting large-scale education reform spanning elementary, secondary, and postsecondary levels. They had met over the last 6 years through their participation in the Community Compacts for Student Success initiative. The purpose of the initiative was to improve the educational performance of all students, particularly those held back by poverty and race, through systematic, large-scale education improvement efforts guided by coalitions of local leaders from education, business, and the community. This report is a product of the evaluation of program sites. The format of this report is a conversational interview with the four education leaders. Topics discussed include what factors motivated educators to engage in communitywide collaboration, the importance of involving higher education, organizational issues in promoting collaboration, the role of the collaborative Compact Director, how success is measured, using resources to support K-16 collaboration, taking K-16 improvement and integration to scale, and advice for others. The report concludes with a background on the meeting participant, the community compacts, and the Education Trust, and a description of program standards and performance indicators. (RT)

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CREATING AN APPETITE FOR CHANGE

Leaders' Perspectives on Promoting K–16 Reform Through Community Collaboration

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A Conversation Among

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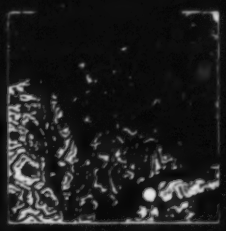

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Creating an Appetite for Change

Leaders' Perspectives on Promoting K-16 Reform Through Community Collaboration

May 2000

Policy Studies Associates, Inc.
Washington, D.C.

Creating an Appetite for Change

Leaders' Perspectives on Promoting K-16 Reform Through Community Collaboration

On September 9th and 10th, 1999, the leaders of three community-wide educational collaborations met to discuss their experiences in promoting large-scale education reform spanning elementary, secondary, and postsecondary levels. These leaders had met regularly over the last six years through their participation in Community Compacts for Student Success, an ambitious education-reform initiative of The Pew Charitable Trusts.

The leaders included Susana Navarro, director of the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence; Rochelle Nichols Solomon, director of the North Philadelphia Community Compact for Student Access and Success; and LeeAnn Withnell, director of the Pueblo Community Compact for Student Success. Kati Haycock, director of the Education Trust, Inc., facilitated the leaders' discussion. The Education Trust provides technical support to the three urban education collaborations. More information about these four individuals and their organizations is presented at the end of this report.

Through the Community Compacts initiative, The Pew Charitable Trusts supported education collaborations in El Paso, Pueblo, and North Philadelphia from 1991 through 1999. The purpose of the initiative was to improve the educational performance of all students, particularly those held back by poverty and race, through systematic, large-scale education improvement efforts guided by coalitions of local leaders from education, business, and the community. The national initiative emphasized the local development, adoption, and implementation of large-scale reform strategies involving higher education as well as elementary and secondary education, in collaboration with other public and private partners. In addition to technical support provided by the Education Trust, the program sites also participated in evaluation activities carried out by Policy Studies Associates, Inc. This report is a product of the evaluation.

"The purpose of the initiative was to improve the educational performance of all students, particularly those held back by poverty and race, through systematic, large-scale education improvement efforts guided by coalitions of local leaders from education, business, and the community."

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In 1996, the Compacts described their collective mission and set three performance goals — or standards — that they planned to attain by 1999, the end of their Pew grant period. The mission and goals that they set are:

MISSION. To achieve significant improvement in the educational success of all students in participating communities, especially poor and minority students, through systemic initiatives that link elementary and secondary education with postsecondary education.

STANDARDS-BASED REFORM. The Compact partners will use content and performance standards to raise the academic achievement of students, K-16.

LEADERSHIP. The Compact partners will consist of the leading education, business, and public/private nonprofit organizations within the community. The chief executive officers (CEOs) of the Compact partners will serve as the Compact's main decisionmaking body. Their job will be to create the conditions needed to increase the educational success of all local students, especially poor and minority students.

ACCOUNTABILITY. The Compact partners will establish accountability systems that are focused on student performance and that are supported by information and incentives.

The full text of the standards and accompanying indicators are presented at the end of this report.

The leaders' discussion in September 1999 focused on the lessons that they have learned about establishing and sustaining a collaborative organization to stimulate and support significant educational improvement for students in local educational institutions, from kindergarten through the baccalaureate — or K-16.

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opportunity

Motivation to Collaborate

HAYCOCK: **What aspirations or worries brought educators and other leaders together in your communities in the first place?**

WITHNELL: In Pueblo, the entire community experienced a major shock when our large steel mill began massive layoffs in 1983. Business leaders went to work to try to attract new business to the region, particularly high-tech industries that would not interfere with local efforts to clean up the air pollution created by the steel industry. The community realized, however, that the quality of our educational system, kindergarten through college, would be a major factor determining whether we could attract the types of employers we sought. We knew that the employers we wanted were looking for a well-educated workforce, and they wanted good schools for their children to attend. These factors, combined with advocacy for better schooling on the part of the parents, made it clear to everyone that we had to move our education system from "good enough" to the best it could possibly be. A few years later, we received another wake-up call when the largest school system in our region received low scores on Colorado's new statewide achievement test. These scores confirmed what we already knew, that it was time to find big solutions to big problems.

NICHOLS SOLOMON: In Philadelphia, we focused our energies on a much smaller region, the impoverished North Philadelphia neighborhood whose children enrolled in three comprehensive high schools. Although these high schools had participated in the "restructuring" initiatives of the Philadelphia High Schools Collaborative, educators and community members alike remained frustrated with the slow pace of improvement. In particular, we felt that we had to find a way to curtail the numbers of young people who were leaving the system each year with minimal skills and limited aspirations for their own future. Although local reforms had achieved some successes at the elementary grades, the comprehensive high schools in North Philadelphia had huge unmet needs. We knew that, among our community resources, were two major institutions of higher education, Temple University and Community College of Philadelphia, both of which had long-standing commitments to their North Philadelphia neighborhood. We believed that the opportunity to create a community-wide collaboration involving local schools and postsecondary institutions offered real promise as a basis for engaging the broader North Philadelphia community around a commitment to improving student achievement, K-16.

"...the opportunity to create a community-wide collaboration involving local schools and postsecondary institutions offered real promise as a basis for engaging the broader North Philadelphia community around a commitment to educational change."

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improvement

NAVARRO: In many ways, our situation in El Paso was not so different, although it was complicated by the fact that the city is served by several school systems. What happened here is that a visionary leader of the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) — President Diana Natalicio — saw an opportunity to connect a growing university with the three largest El Paso school systems to address a common need, which was achieving dramatic educational improvement for all students. Dr. Natalicio persuaded the UTEP faculty and leaders of the three school systems — El Paso, Ysleta, and Socorro Independent School Districts — that a collaborative effort that reached out to El Paso Community College and other institutions in El Paso would provide a stimulus to improvement that would reach all El Paso students.

HAYCOCK: **Have these forces and concerns remained important, or did they change?**

WITHNELL: In Pueblo, we have achieved some successes in business development and employment, but I'm happy to say that this success hasn't diminished the commitment of community leaders to collaborate and advocate on behalf of better schooling. In addition to the business community, a powerful voice for education reform in Pueblo is the Pueblo Hispanic Education Foundation, which reaches all the media, citizens, and institutions citywide to advocate for large-scale improvements in the schooling of Hispanic and non-Hispanic children. Leaders throughout the region realize that improving education and forging K-16 integration must be a continuing mission and that it must involve everyone — parents, faculty, employers, civic organizations, students — in order to succeed.

NICHOLS SOLOMON: Our effort was given a major shot in the arm by the arrival in 1994 of a new reform-oriented superintendent, David Hornbeck, who brought a ten-point agenda for large-scale change, known as *Children Achieving*, to the School District of Philadelphia. He has voiced continuing enthusiasm for the North Philadelphia Community Compact because its mission is totally consistent with *Children Achieving*, and it brings resources and institutional capacities to improve some of the Philadelphia schools with the most serious educational needs.

NAVARRO: The El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence, the Compact entity in El Paso, has attracted federal and other funding, which we have used to improve instruction in math, science, and literacy, K-16. These classroom-level improvements and other efforts by educators citywide are showing up in test score gains on our state assessment, the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). With the state and national recognition that this success has brought to the Collaborative, we are now engaging more directly with our local business and civic

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community. Although we didn't have an early commitment from business leaders, as Pueblo did, the business community is coming around now, as its leaders see how a more highly skilled local workforce and a reputation for good schools can accelerate the region's economic growth.

HAYCOCK: **Do you have any idea yet what the legacy of these efforts will be?**

NICHOLS SOLOMON: I think about this all the time. Improving education through K-16 collaboration is a radically different strategy for most educators and for others who care about the quality of education. In Philadelphia, we have learned that we must involve the larger community every step of the way. We find that we need to address a few key questions again and again. What does "high standards" mean? How do you translate high standards into classroom practice? How do you prepare students to meet the new expectations for effort and performance that are embodied in high standards? In our case we have had to make the case that our students *can* do it, that with certain tools and resources they can consistently perform at high levels.

"Improving education through K-16 collaboration is a radically different strategy for most educators and for others who care about the quality of education."

Early on, we thought we could simply present stakeholders with data on our students and with explanations about how change can improve students' performance. But we learned that we have to do more. We have to build what I call an appetite for change. This can only come from persuading the community, first, that change is necessary and, second, that change is possible.

NAVARRO: I agree that an appetite for change is essential. For me, that means creating the conditions to inform and support decisionmakers in asking the right questions, at whatever level in the system they may be working.

WITHNELL: Our Community Compact has demonstrated the value of bold decisions followed by bold action steps. This is possible only through the Compact's collaborative consideration of options and trade-offs and the thorough airing of issues and the implications of possible decisions. Once that occurs and is followed by actions and institutional commitments, our Community Compact has been able to implement change at a scale and level that would not be possible by a single institution or organization acting alone.

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Involving Higher Education

HAYCOCK: **How important is it to involve higher education in this work?**

WITHNELL: It has been centrally important. In Pueblo, our postsecondary partners — the University of Southern Colorado (USC) and Pueblo Community College (PCC) — now see that change is just as important for them as it is in elementary and secondary schools. USC prepares a large percentage of the teachers in our area. In fact, teacher preparation is a major mission of this university. It has come to realize that the effectiveness of new teachers has a direct bearing on the quality of entering freshmen. If new teachers are not themselves able to meet high academic standards, they cannot teach those standards to others. Similarly, new teachers — from USC or any other institution — need to be able to employ a wide range of teaching tools in order to be effective in classrooms. The demands placed on higher education are underscored by high levels of student, teacher, and school accountability, especially at K-12 levels.

NICHOLS SOLOMON: I know that UTEP also sees its fate as closely intertwined with that of K-12 education in the El Paso area. Although I wish that were also the case in Philadelphia, it just isn't to the same degree. Even though our Compact's four-year partner, Temple University, is our biggest supplier of new teachers, it does not see teacher preparation as one of its major missions. Also, Temple hasn't decided on the extent to which it wants to be a major contributor to the development of North Philadelphia. Fortunately for us, we have strong allies in senior administrators at Temple, who have helped to involve the university's academic departments in K-16 collaboration and to set strategic priorities supporting K-16 development and collaboration within the university.

NAVARRO: As you point out, we are working with a very positive set of circumstances in El Paso, including the K-16 commitment of UTEP. In addition to the publicly voiced support from our university president — or perhaps *because* of her support — we have been able to forge close alliances with many of the academic disciplines in the university. This means that the faculty and administrators in these disciplines are involved in teacher preparation issues to a remarkable degree and in collaboration to improve elementary and secondary curriculum.

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Collaboration

HAYCOCK: **Are higher education faculty members in your universities thinking more deeply about their own teaching as a result of their engagement in K-16 reform?**

NAVARRO: Yes, but not to the extent they can and should. We find that university faculty need many types of opportunities for reflection on their own teaching. Just as in efforts to achieve K-12 reform, hard data on undergraduates' performance, including student progress and outcomes, are an essential tool to support informed reflection by university faculty. And faculty need frameworks and examples to help them see how they can raise their expectations for students and eliminate social promotion, while providing academic and other supports for low achieving students.

"Just as in efforts to achieve K-12 reform, hard data on undergraduates' performance, including student progress and outcomes, are an essential tool to support informed reflection by university faculty."

WITHNELL: The Pueblo Community Compact is working with USC to encourage and support university faculty in examining their own academic standards. We come at this set of issues from the perspective of teacher preparation, but that focus quickly leads us into the general education program of students' first two years. Faculty are seeing that they need to improve the general education curriculum to achieve overall institutional improvement, as well as improvement in teacher preparation. At Pueblo Community College, some departments (such as English) are redefining their course offerings to create greater continuity with the K-12 curriculum.

In the past, higher education would tell us that they already had academic standards. But now that they are seeing what an aligned standards and accountability system can be, some of them are beginning to understand standards quite differently.

HAYCOCK: **We've been told that it's unrealistic to try to promote change at both K-12 and higher education at the same time. Have you found there to be a synergy between the two levels?**

NAVARRO: Yes, definitely. In El Paso, the Collaborative has found that achieving either K-12 change or higher education change alone is very, very hard. A balanced approach has by far the greatest chance of long-term success, for many reasons, including the support that each can give the other. Having said that, we have found that it's nearly impossible to give both sides equal attention all the time.

Although it is important for this work to be strategic in terms of framing and implementation, it is particularly crucial on the higher education side, because of the resistance to pedagogical change among university-based scholars, who tend to focus on their academic disciplines from the perspective of research and advanced studies.

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Organizational Issues in Promoting Collaboration

HAYCOCK: **What organizational or structural considerations do you find to be important in promoting the effectiveness of K-16 collaborative entities?**

NICHOLS SOLOMON: I would start by saying that these collaborative entities can't be static. The collaborative group must continually examine its organizational structure to make sure that it is accommodating new interests and forces as they emerge — and that it is also accommodating changes in its partners that occur through leadership transitions and other events. Without this continual review, political problems will arise, with the potential to swamp any accomplishments of the group's.

"The collaborative group must continually examine its organizational structure to make sure that it is accommodating new interests and forces as they emerge."

NAVARRO: Our experience in putting together an education summit in El Paso reflects this type of tension. On the one hand, we had been trying for years to involve the El Paso business and political communities in the Collaborative's work, but with little success. We were delighted when it became apparent that these leaders had decided to focus on education and to use the Collaborative as the vehicle for their efforts. When we actually began to plan for the summit, however, it became clear that we needed to frame a very streamlined, simple message, in order to make sure that we could keep this diverse group together and that we didn't create political tensions within the group. It's been a real challenge, and I can't say that I'm yet satisfied that we've reached consensus on a message and set of strategies.

HAYCOCK: **The Pueblo Community Compact has always been based on a strong relationship between the business community and education, and it has grown stronger over time. What has been the critical component in this relationship, practically speaking?**

WITHNELL: A central contributor in Pueblo is the Joint Education Committee (JEC) of the Greater Pueblo Chamber of Commerce and the Latino Chamber of Commerce. The JEC, which is a vital part of the Compact, asks the hard questions about student performance and the day-to-day strategies that Pueblo's educational institutions are using to improve student performance. The JEC serves, in effect, as an accountability vehicle for the whole K-16 enterprise in Pueblo. Moreover, some members of the JEC have gone on to elected roles as school board members and state legislators. So, the JEC is also an important training ground for local leaders. An issue that local educators face in working with the JEC, however, is that these business people tend to think in terms of quick fixes. We as educators try to teach JEC members what is possible and what will really support long-term change. At

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the same time, they are teaching us to be more strategic (in terms of setting priorities and creating incentives) and less patient with drawn-out planning and implementation schedules.

NAVARRO: I'm impressed with what Pueblo has achieved in terms of the active involvement of your business community as well as the chief executive officers (CEOs) of your major educational agencies and institutions. How have you kept them involved and productive?

WITHNELL: For one thing, we know that leadership change is a constant in our member organizations, and in fact virtually every one of our leaders has been replaced over the past eight years. When a new leader is named to a member organization, the other Compact CEOs meet with that individual to explain the importance of the Compact's work. Getting a visit from the university president or one of our two school superintendents can be pretty persuasive. By securing the involvement of newly appointed CEOs, the Compact constantly renews itself. In the early days of the Compact, we didn't realize how important this renewal really was. Now we understand that you don't just build a set of relationships and then go on to something else. You must constantly work on renewing and improving the relationships.

NAVARRO: We did something similar when our participant school systems replaced their superintendents. The Collaborative went to them and said, "We have this structure that allows us to work collaboratively across K-12 systems and with higher education. It works for all of us and will facilitate your work in your district. We want you on board with us."

With UTEP, our experience has been different. Because we have had continuity in the UTEP presidency and because the president Diana Natalicio has understood and endorsed the Collaborative's work so fully, our work in the university has deepened and strengthened over time. However, we have not made the case for collaboration as effectively at the community college level.

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WITHNELL: A part of our learning has been to understand how other organizations work. For example, the two Chambers of Commerce in our community move from event to event. Planning for those events creates the context for outreach and policymaking, we have found. Once we learned to operate with that orientation, we could achieve results more easily with our business-based CEOs.

NICHOLS SOLOMON: For us, the Philadelphia business community has important political connections that we need, especially at the state level, but leaders of the business community are reluctant to expend their political capital on our behalf with leaders of state government unless we can make an airtight case for ourselves. With more efforts on our side, I believe that we can make our case for further help.

WITHNELL: A tool that has been valuable to the Pueblo Community Compact has been the capacity and resources to take our Compact's CEOs away from Pueblo to discuss and plan around a specific issue. This has usually occurred in the context of the leadership and national conferences sponsored by the Education Trust. In those settings, our team members engage in serious discussions with leaders from other cities, but just as importantly we talk to each other without outside interruptions. I can point to major breakthroughs made in two critical areas — use of ESEA Title I resources and the preparation of high-quality teacher candidates — as examples of the value of these opportunities.

"Getting a visit from the university president or one of our two school superintendents can be pretty persuasive. By securing the involvement of newly appointed CEOs, the Compact constantly renews itself."

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HAYCOCK: **Rochelle, your community is particularly complex. Higher education has not been as active a partner in North Philadelphia as in Pueblo and El Paso, although you have forged partnerships with higher education wherever you found a receptive audience. What has this experience taught you about finding common ground with potential collaborators?**

NICHOLS SOLOMON: It has taught us that you have to build on your unique strengths wherever you happen to find yourself and whatever the hand that you have been dealt. We have been fortunate to have the North Philadelphia Compact lodged within a large, respected private nonprofit organization that plays a central role in advocating for educational improvements in Philadelphia — the Philadelphia Education Fund. This makes us independent but still aware of the internal pressures that affect educators in the school system and partnering higher education institutions. Of the two traits, the more important one is our independence. This has permitted us to pioneer the work in developing and using high academic standards in Philadelphia. If the school district had tried to do the same thing, it would have been criticized for pushing too hard too fast.

HAYCOCK: **Let's turn to teachers unions. In neither El Paso nor Pueblo are unions involved in Compact governance, but in Philadelphia the union does participate to some extent. How do you think about that now? To what extent do unions need to be engaged?**

NAVARRO: In El Paso, teachers' professional associations are enormously influential in school board elections, and they play important roles in other contexts. We are now realizing that we need to bring those voices — and the voices of students — to the table.

WITHNELL: I don't know if the unions need to be part of the Compact governance group, but they definitely need to be active participants in planning and implementation.

NICHOLS SOLOMON: In Philadelphia, union leaders contribute significantly at the working group level of the Compact. Their role is more valuable there than at the union's senior level, where the collaborative impulse is different.

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Crucial Role of the Compact Director

HAYCOCK: **This discussion so far reminds me how many factors affect every decision a Compact makes. Because there are no simple decision rules, the Compact director's job is especially complex and crucial. We thought from the beginning that selecting the Compact director would be the most important task of the Compact boards. What personal characteristics do you think are particularly important in doing your jobs?**

NAVARRO: I think the Compact director needs an ability to see opportunities and to capitalize on them.

HAYCOCK: Yes, but that understates the importance of your role. Good Compact directors also know how to search the environment for opportunities and then to recognize them when they appear.

WITHNELL: Opportunities emerge in strange ways sometimes. With one of our Compact's partners, I struggled until I made the CEO angry. That anger was our first step toward mutual understanding and a successful relationship.

"...need for the Compact director to have a sense of relentlessness, along with a strong commitment to the goals of K-16 reform."

NAVARRO: That story exemplifies the need for the Compact director to have a sense of relentlessness, along with a strong commitment to the goals of K-16 reform. Serving as a Compact director has to be a thousand times more than a job.

WITHNELL: In my case, personal hardship at an early age had left me without an outside support system, forcing me to dig deep within myself for motivation and drive. That made me a risk-taker in certain ways but, more importantly, a learner. My experiences made me understand that all children can learn, but that many children will need help to get the opportunities they need.

experience

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HAYCOCK: **I see in all three of you the confidence and also the ego to push people to act in support of shared values.**

NICHOLS SOLOMON: At the same time, this work can be isolating. We need to be able to ventilate and recharge with colleagues who are trying to do the same types of work but in other cities. This requires a forum for regular sharing. In the case of the Community Compacts, the forum provided by the Education Trust has given us an opportunity to understand what our colleagues elsewhere are doing, to share ideas and worries and war stories, and to learn about developments in Washington that may affect our work.

HAYCOCK: **What do people think about you?**

NICHOLS SOLOMON: People think I'm a trouble-maker, an agitator. I sometimes feel that I'm trying to press against a learned hopelessness in the culture of our schools. But I believe that you can do something to make a change.

NAVARRO: People see me, and they say, "Here she comes again with the same old harangue." But I believe it's a harangue that they need to hear. I know that some values are non-negotiable, and I communicate that every chance I get. At the same time, we all need to be able to negotiate the details of implementation, how we get from here to there — and that I am willing to do.

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Measuring Success

HAYCOCK: **Where do you look to determine whether the work of your Compact is achieving success?**

NICHOLS SOLOMON: I am constantly looking for evidence of change, in test scores but also in the way that the schools look and feel. I also look for indicators in conversations with educators, students, and parents. I have found that it's essential to use multiple indicators; a single indicator may hide too much.

"I am constantly looking for evidence of change, in test scores but also in the way that the schools look and feel."

An area in which I have seen improvement is in the willingness of other educators to use student data as a source of practical information. When the Compact first started, looking at data was pretty radical. Now, it's accepted practice, in part, I think, because the Compact has been insistent in continually bringing all parties back to the evidence of students' needs and achievements. What keeps me sane is seeing the occasional breakthroughs. This keeps me going.

HAYCOCK: **What do the breakthrough moments look like?**

NICHOLS SOLOMON: An important breakthrough moment in Philadelphia was when teachers and others in the system began to realize that the reform plan of our then-new superintendent was a reality and that it wasn't going to quietly fade away.

NAVARRO: A breakthrough moment for me was when I realized that educators were finally welcoming the availability of accurate data on student progress. Even though they knew that the data could reflect poorly on them personally, they still wanted to know what it said and its implications for instruction. They were no longer making excuses for why a particular test score or achievement index didn't apply to them or to their school. Another breakthrough moment was when I heard one of our local business leaders say that he was going to stop trashing public education and get involved in improving our schools.

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HAYCOCK: **How do you determine whether linkages are forming across levels of schooling?**

NICHOLS SOLOMON: In Philadelphia, I am particularly concerned about the extent to which Temple and Community College of Philadelphia are involved in the Compact's reform activities. Most of our teachers in North Philadelphia come through one or both of these institutions, so these higher education connections to K-12 reform are extremely important for the long-term success of North Philadelphia students.

WITHNELL: I look for connections between high school graduation and college admissions. Practically speaking, this means that I am looking at high school advising and whether all high school students are working with guidance counselors to plan for college and, by twelfth grade, to prepare college applications. I also look at the academic advice given to incoming students at USC and PCC.

NAVARRO: At this point in the evolution of the El Paso Collaborative, I am looking for evidence of linkages primarily at higher education. In particular, I am looking at the involvement of the university president and the engagement of the academic deans. I want to see that they understand why K-16 improvement is important to higher education and that they are using this understanding to engage their own faculty.

The next level of engagement, beyond the deans' understanding and the content of their communications, is especially hard. I want to see that the deans are using considerations of K-16 engagement in their decisions about who will serve as department chairs.

WITHNELL: As your comment suggests, Susana, a practical indicator of K-16 progress is the reward structures for higher education faculty, especially the criteria for determining tenure.

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Using Resources to Support K-16 Collaboration

HAYCOCK: **What does your experience tell you about the resources that help achieve effectiveness?**

NICHOLS SOLOMON: The central resource is, of course, people. A successful K-16 collaboration needs full-time, dedicated staff, in order to create a critical mass of effort and success and to go to scale.

NAVARRO: Our experience in El Paso confirms this observation. It's very hard to achieve strategic change using only borrowed staff. We have confronted this issue in working with our math and science mentors. We believe that we succeeded in changing this dynamic through the direct hiring of staff for our corps of school-based instructional leaders in literacy.

HAYCOCK: **In your efforts to attract new resources, do you mainly try to find dollars to devote to the centralized work of the Compact or to support improvement efforts in schools and higher education institutions?**

NAVARRO: The short answer is that you need resources for both. The Compact itself needs almost a full-time person, and that individual needs to be very strategic in deciding how to spend his or her time.

WITHNELL: In Pueblo, we have used various methods for supporting instructional coaching. In one of our staffing patterns, the coaches work directly in the schools but also spend part of their time getting trained and recharged at the University of Southern Colorado. This arrangement links top-down policymaking and bottom-up innovation and responsiveness. In effect, the instructional coaches provide a ready-made outreach network for me as Compact director.

NAVARRO: What you are describing, LeeAnn, is consistent with a resource strategy that puts resources close to needs, while also using relatively small amounts of resources to leverage broader change from the top.

"...a resource strategy that puts resources close to needs, while also using relatively small amounts of resources to leverage broader change from the top."

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Taking K-16 Improvement and Integration to Scale

HAYCOCK: **What strategies are most important in achieving scale in this work? How can we get away from fighting this battle school by school and teacher by teacher?**

WITHNELL: Our experience in Pueblo tells us that, as important as it is to get the right policies in place, policies alone are never enough. Policies must be tightly linked to the practices that support them in order to make a difference. We have had the experience in Pueblo of going through torturous discussions and negotiations to adopt an important policy (for example, policies shaping faculty reward structures or high school graduation requirements) that was then never implemented, because implementation responsibilities were not clearly planned or assigned.

"Policies must be tightly linked to the practices that support them in order to make a difference."

NAVARRO: Any workable strategies involve adopting and applying sanctions for ineffective performance. But this requires us to be willing to force educators and others to pay the price for doing the wrong thing. Until the last few years, few people have had the courage to do this.

HAYCOCK: Hospitals analyze their own data on effectiveness to make ineffective doctors pay the price for mistakes. Through data monitoring and analysis, they know which doctors are achieving success and which are not. They then deny privileges to any doctor who is regularly ineffective. Unless they are explicitly required to do that type of monitoring, principals somehow feel that they don't have the same leverage. In fact, they often don't have the data needed to know which teachers are effective and which are not.

NICHOLS SOLOMON: In ineffective schools, the notion that "all students can learn to high standards" tends to be way down on the priorities list. These schools may not know how to achieve positive change. In Philadelphia, we have a school quality review that is conducted in low performing schools, and this review focuses on the school's capacity and commitment to support all students in achieving high standards. The school system says that it lacks the resources to conduct the review for all schools, however. This is a good example of the type of problem that prevents us from moving to scale with high standards and first-rate instruction for all children.

NAVARRO: In most places, we just need the will to use the information and tools we already have, applying them to high standards for student performance. An analytic framework that is generating growing interest is known by the short-hand term "value-added" analysis. It allows you to look at patterns of gains across students, teachers, and school years.

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HAYCOCK: Value-added analysis compares teachers, using a predicted pass rate for their students based on each student's prior achievement. With that information, you can examine each teacher's actual performance in light of his or her students' predicted and actual performance. Over a large group of students, you can assume that greater-than-expected gains reflect especially good teaching, or a high value-added by the teacher. This analysis method also permits systematic comparisons across teachers and schools.

NICHOLS SOLOMON: Value-added analysis would be useful to us as a means of identifying teachers who would benefit from intensive professional development.

HAYCOCK: I agree. I would also like to see a "hard" use, such as linking teacher pay to their value added to student achievement. Research conducted in Tennessee concludes that principals don't know how effective or ineffective individual teachers are. Value-added analyses can inform principals and give them information on which they can base rewards and sanctions.

We know from research that students who are assigned two ineffective teachers in consecutive years experience enormous setbacks in academic achievement. At a minimum, principals could use information from value-added analyses to make sure that no student gets two ineffective teachers in a row.

"In most places, we just need the will to use the information and tools we already have..."

HAYCOCK: **Looking at the issue of scale from the perspective of where to locate change agents, Susana has advocated the use of Compact staff as a means of kick-starting the change process. LeeAnn said that we need to make change come from within the frontline organizations, that it may not work to impose it from outside. How do you reconcile these perspectives?**

WITHNELL: In actuality, I think you need both — someone working from the system level and someone else working at the service-delivery level.

HAYCOCK: When we have looked at Compacts and K-16s, we have found too many that remain mired in planning at the top levels of their organizations. It has taken years for them to have an impact on teachers. El Paso was able to affect principals and teachers early on, however. If you are going to get systems change happening fast and effectively, it may be better to do it through a nimble, external organization.

NAVARRO: You can invest huge resources trying to change belief systems, but I'm not sure what you can be guaranteed of achieving down the line. As a complement to other attributes, a strong statewide accountability system, such as the one we have in Texas, may be virtually essential.

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Advice for Others

HAYCOCK: **Do you have any words of advice for community collaborations that are just forming?**

WITHNELL: I believe that the power is in the process, because the process affects values. We need to get people deeply engaged in their own work. Although all parents know their children can learn, educators are harder to convince.

NICHOLS SOLOMON: Not only can children learn, but adults can learn too. Teachers and administrators need to be willing to take risks and to experiment. But at the same time, they need supports and systems that can help them, such as Philadelphia's performance accountability system, which helps teachers to look at and use data. We will need to use this in Philadelphia as we prepare to welcome a massive new wave of teachers who will replace anticipated retirees. They don't bring old baggage, but neither do they know the work that has already been done.

HAYCOCK: **Are you saying that there are two big categories of work — the advocacy side and the internal tools for improvement, such as an accountability system?**

NAVARRO: So much depends on the local community. What works in one place may not work anywhere else. In El Paso, we experienced an immense hunger for change. I knew that we could achieve a few accomplishments rather quickly, working in tandem with the state accountability system.

I think that change agents need to hit the ground running. The public constituency for a major reform, such as K-16 collaboration, needs to know that a particular proposed effort is going to deliver quickly.

NICHOLS SOLOMON: I agree. You need to tap into what's already in place, using existing energy and resources. You need to acknowledge what's already been done and build on whatever was there before. But, ultimately, you should seize the moment to accelerate change. For example, we're about to have a new mayor. How do you ensure that the reform agenda moves along when there are new people in leadership positions?

A continuing problem for us and others is the pall cast by the entrenched methods of every school system's central office. New superintendents typically come in and want to clear out the central office, but, more often than not, they end up replacing one set of bureaucrats with another.

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HAYCOCK: **Can local versions of academic discipline associations be effective agents of change?**

NAVARRO: I would rather invest elsewhere. Local discipline groups may have a love of the academic field but not a love of students. Subject matter strategies can be limiting, even as much as El Paso has benefited from them. You need to be concerned with equity, access, and accountability, within the context of the academic subjects.

"You need to be concerned with equity, access, and accountability, within the context of the academic subjects."

HAYCOCK: **How can we emphasize that mind-set of equity, access, and accountability for teachers, especially young teachers?**

NICHOLS SOLOMON: Because young teachers tend to get pulled in too many directions, we often lose them. These individuals need opportunities to develop both content knowledge and their own sense of social responsibility, as part of the teacher induction process. This process could help us retain good teachers by giving them kindred spirits as well as practical tools.

NAVARRO: I agree. We need to bring new teachers together and help them to become supports for one another. The framework should be that of providing mutual support to advance core values. Too often, opportunities for reflection lack a meaningful framework.

HAYCOCK: I'm worried that some of our favored school reform approaches lack a real edge. We need to be the keepers of the standards. We need to be the ones to say: "Our students — and we ourselves — can do more."

HAYCOCK: **If you were starting from the beginning again, what would you do differently?**

NICHOLS SOLOMON: I would try to focus the Compact more on providing in-school supports for high standards.

WITHNELL: The Pueblo Community Compact devoted major attention to CEOs and to teachers. Given the chance to make some changes, I would give the same attention to principals, department heads, and guidance counselors.

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NAVARRO: I would do more of what LeeAnn did the first time around: I would enlarge the Collaborative's focus on senior leaders, in order to ensure their understanding and buy-in. The Pueblo Community Compact made CEOs real decisionmakers, and that has paid off for you. You trusted that process to work. In El Paso, we haven't trusted the process in the same way, and as a result we have not achieved that sense of buy-in that Pueblo achieved. Now we're trying to accomplish buy-in at a later stage, and we don't know whether this strategy will be as effective as Pueblo's in the long run.

HAYCOCK: **Thank you very much.**

Community

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Background on the Meeting Participants, the Compacts, and the Education Trust

Each of the three Community Compacts has had the good fortune to retain the same educator in a central role throughout its period of grant funding and beyond. This continuity in leadership has paid off in countless ways, making it possible to articulate a consistent vision of educational reform and to nurture complex relationships over time. Similarly, the Education Trust and its key staff have played a consistent role of encouragement, advice, and support throughout the Community Compacts initiative. Described below are the meeting participants, the Compacts, the Education Trust, and The Pew Charitable Trusts.

EL PASO

Throughout her career, **Susana Navarro** has worked as an agent for educational change, particularly on behalf of the poor and disenfranchised. She has worked as a VISTA volunteer and as a research analyst for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. In the early 1980s, she served as the national research director for the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund. Before founding and directing the El Paso Collaborative, Navarro served as one of the founders and directors of the Achievement Council, in California. She holds a doctorate in educational psychology.

The **El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence** is organizationally housed within the University of Texas at El Paso and works closely with the three major El Paso school systems, which are the El Paso, Ysleta, and Socorro Independent School Districts. The Collaborative works with virtually all of the schools of the three districts to create conditions that renew and improve curricula, school structure, and the quality of teaching and learning for all students, especially those who are minority and poor. It also works with UTEP and the El Paso Community College to support the transformation of systems for preparing future teachers and to enhance the undergraduate curriculum and student achievement among all undergraduates.

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NORTH PHILADELPHIA

Rochelle Nichols Solomon directs the North Philadelphia Community Compact from her organizational home base at the Philadelphia Education Fund, where she serves as Senior Program Director with oversight responsibility for the Fund's work in the area of School and Community Partnerships. Before joining the Fund, Ms. Nichols Solomon served as a program officer for the Philadelphia Foundation, with responsibilities for grants supporting children, youth, and families. Much of her work overall has involved strengthening families and communities to advocate for policy change on behalf of children and youth.

The **North Philadelphia Community Compact for Student Access and Success** focuses its efforts on students enrolled in three comprehensive high schools in North Philadelphia. In addition to the School District of Philadelphia, the other Compact partners include Temple University and Community College of Philadelphia. The Compact focuses its energies on improving the schooling experiences of students who attend the three high schools or the elementary and middle schools that feed into these high schools. The Compact also directs attention to these same students as they graduate from high school and enroll in either of the two participating postsecondary institutions. In addition to working to improve the quality of instruction provided to these students, the Compact also directs attention and other resources to facilitating students' transitions between levels of schooling.

PUEBLO

The career of **LeeAnn Withnell** has centered on education reform, especially linkages across levels of schooling and across instructional and administrative strategies. Withnell has served as a middle and high school teacher, college instructor, library media specialist, and school system administrator. In Pueblo, she had leadership responsibilities within the K-16 collaboration, known as the Pueblo Educational Alliance, that preceded the Community Compact. Withnell holds a doctorate in higher educational administration.

The partners in the **Pueblo Community Compact for Student Success** are Pueblo School District No. 60, Pueblo School District No. 70, Pueblo Community College, the University of Southern Colorado, the Greater Pueblo Chamber of Commerce, and the Latino Chamber of Commerce. The Compact describes itself as an initiative to "design and implement systemic reforms that increase the number of students, especially disadvantaged and minority students, who are academically prepared to access, enter, and succeed in postsecondary education." The primary strategies highlighted by the Compact involve high standards, professional development, support structures, and system alignment.

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THE EDUCATION TRUST, INC.

Kati Haycock has served since 1992 as director of the Education Trust and is an advocate for improved student achievement, kindergarten through college, especially for students who are poor or members of minority groups. Early in her career, Haycock served as director of Outreach and Student Affirmative Action Programs for the nine-campus University of California system. She later founded and led the Achievement Council and served as executive vice president of the Children's Defense Fund, the nation's largest child advocacy organization.

The Education Trust, Inc., works to advocate high academic achievement for all students at all levels, kindergarten through college, with a particular focus on low-income, Latino, African American, and Native American students and the schools and colleges that serve them. The Education Trust was established in 1990 by the American Association for Higher Education as a special project to encourage colleges and universities to support K-12 reform. The Trust has since grown into an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to providing a strong voice for students in education reform and for advocating local, state, and national strategies to close the academic achievement gap between low-income and minority students and their more advantaged peers. The Trust has provided technical support for the Community Compacts for Student Success and continues to coordinate a national network of Compact and K-16 reform communities dedicated to high academic achievement and gap-closing strategies for all students.

THE PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS

The Pew Charitable Trusts, one of the country's largest foundations, focuses its grantmaking in the areas of education, culture, the environment, health and human services, public policy, and religion. The foundation strives to invest in ideas that fuel timely action and results. Throughout the last decade, the Trusts have focused a significant portion of its resources on supporting programs that further education reform in America.

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Program Standards and Performance Indicators

Mission of the Community Compacts initiative: To achieve significant improvement in the educational success of all students in participating communities, especially poor and minority students, through systemic initiatives that link elementary and secondary education with postsecondary education.

By the end of their second funding cycle, the Compacts will achieve the expectations articulated in the following standards and indicators:

Standard 1 — Standards-based reform. The Compact partners use content and performance standards to raise the academic achievement of students, K-16.

a. The Compact partners lead and support the development, adoption, and implementation of high academic standards for all students, K-16. The standards address both content and measures of student performance.

b. The Compact partners use challenging academic standards as the basis for curriculum, instructional methods, and assessment procedures in the education of all students, K-16. Standards are used to align curriculum, instruction, and assessment and to determine promotion (including high school graduation and college admission) across grades and levels of schooling.

c. The Compact partners use challenging academic standards as the basis for the pre-service training and ongoing professional development of teachers and college faculty.

d. The Compact partners assist educators in translating major reform priorities into concrete improvements in institutional organizations, classroom practice, and structures for student support. The Compact partners continually measure the success of these strategies in improving achievement.

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Standard 2 — Leadership. The Compact partners consist of the leading education, business, and public/private nonprofit organizations within the community. The chief executive officers (CEOs) of the Compact partners serve as the Compact's main decisionmaking body. Their job is to create the conditions needed to increase the educational success of all local students, especially poor and minority students.

a. The Compact agreement engages many diverse institutional and community representatives, including representatives of all organizations playing important local roles in K-12 and postsecondary education.

b. The Compact partners advance the Compact's mission within their own institutions and in the community by involving educational faculties and staffs, employers and employees, parents, students, and others in the Compact's work.

c. The Compact partners commit to reallocate existing resources and obtain new resources so as to support significant educational improvement for all students K-16, especially poor and minority students. An objective of resource reallocation is reducing and eventually eliminating the achievement gap between minority and nonminority students.

Standard 3 — Accountability. The Compact partners establish accountability systems that are focused on student performance and that are supported by information and incentives.

a. The Compact partners establish policies that shift incentive structures and accountability measures to models that reward individuals and teams for increased student achievement and that sanction repeated failure. These policies may address incentives associated with tenure, compensation, resource allocation, departmental autonomy, teaching assignments, and teaching load.

b. The Compact partners establish high school graduation requirements that will permit all Compact students to finish high school prepared for admission to the Compact's postsecondary education institutions and for academic success in college. High school graduation requirements are aligned with the admissions requirements of the Compact's postsecondary institutions; requirements for both high school graduation and college admissions are expressed in terms of student attainment of the standards.

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c. The Compact partners use data on student enrollment and performance to inform decisions about improving student achievement.

d. The Compact staff assist the Compact partners in developing their capacity to collect and analyze data on student enrollment and performance and in reporting student data to the national Community Compacts initiative.

e. The Compact partners provide regular and accurate reports to the public (including reports to parents and students) on students' enrollment and performance.

i. Public reports address progress in meeting local goals, identify significant issues, and describe strategies for consideration and possible implementation in the following months.

ii. Public reporting occurs in the context of discussions about educational goals and desired outcomes for students.

iii. Reports are linked to academic standards and their attainment, with these measures replacing or supplementing measures such as seat time, grade point averages, and class ranking.

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